

Message Text

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SUBJ: PRELIMINARY MEETING OF REPS TO FAO

COMMITTEE ON FOOD AID:

TUESDAY MORNING DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR USTUN (ROBINSON IS IN NEW YORK) CHAIRED A MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES TO FAO TO GO OVER PLANS FOR CEA 2. MOST OF THE DISCUSSION CENTERED ON TWO SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS (COORDINATION AND FOOD AID TARGETS) FOR WHICH UNFORTUNATELY DOCUMENTS HAD NOT YET BEEN MADE AVAILABLE. SEVERAL DELEGATIONS INDICATED THAT THESE WERE SUBJECTS OF SOME INTEREST TO CAPITALS. SECRETARIAT UNDERTOOK TO AIRMAIL 7C TARGETS TODAY AND 7B COORDINATION HOPEFULLY TOMORROW. USTUN NOTED THAT \$10 MILLION OF THIS YEAR'S EMERGENCY AUTHORITY STILL REMAINED AND CFA WAS NOT BEING ASKED FOR AN INCREASE; THAT SOME ADDITIONAL RESPONSES HAD BEEN RECEIVED ON THE EMERGENCY RESERVE (UNGA-SS7); THAT ACABQ HAD NOT BEEN VERY UNDERSTANDING OR SYMPATHETIC TO THE PROPOSED BUDGET INCREASE BUT THE FAO FINANCE COMMITTEE WAS SUPPORTIVE (5 RATHER THAN 6 NEW JOBS); AND THE SECRETARIAT CONSIDERED "IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE" FOR THE CFA TO SET UP A WORKING GROUP TO CONSIDER REVISIONS OF THE GENERAL REGULATIONS.

2. TENTATIVE TIMETABLE FOR CFA 2 HAS PLENARY MEETING ALL OF UNCLASSIFIED

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METHODS OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL FOOD AID PROGRAMS WITH

A VIEW TO ELIMINATING OVERLAPPING OF EFFORT." IT NOW IS A MORE COMPREHENSIVE NARRATIVE, COMPARED WITH THE EARLY WFP DRAFT, OF THE BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE CONCERNING LIMITED EFFORTS TO COORDINATE MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL FOOD AID ASSISTANCE, WITH SUBSTANTIALLY MORE ATTENTION TO FAO ACTIVITIES AND THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF FOOD SECURITY ENDORSED BY THE CONFERENCE. IT IS LESS ACTION ORIENTED THAN THE EARLIER DRAFT, BUT POTENTIALLY WOULD PROVIDE FOR A MORE COMPREHENSIVE ROLE FOR AN INTERNATIONAL FOCUS, AT LEAST ON AN ADVISORY BASIS, TOWARD COMMON CRITERIA, COUNTRY TARGETS, ETC. FOR FOOD AID ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF THE SOURCE. IT STRESSES THE OBJECTIVE, NONPOLITICAL ROLE THAT AN INTERNATIONAL AGENCY CAN PLAY AS COMPARED WITH BILATERAL PROGRAMS, RECOGNIZES THAT SOME 80 PERCENT OF FOOD AID TRAVELS THE BILATERAL ROUTE, AND THUS SETS THE BASIS FOR THE HONEST BROKER TO ESTABLISH RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH WOULD LEAD TO A MORE EFFICIENT AND LESS WASTEFUL UTILIZATION OF TOTAL RESOURCES.

2. THE PAPER CONCLUDES THAT THE CFA MIGHT WISH TO A) REAFFIRM THE OBJECTIVES OF COORDINATION AGREED BY THE IGC AT ITS 17TH SESSION AND ENDORSED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (IGC 17/5 REV. 1; GA RESOLUTION 2682-XXV), B) CONSIDER IF THESE OBJECTIVES NEED TO BE ENLARGED IN THE LIGHT OF SUBSEQUENT EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENTS, C) REQUEST THE SECRETARIAT TO ASSEMBLE, WITH THE HELP OF FAO, NECESSARY INFORMATION ON BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL FOOD AID POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS THE EXPERIENCE OF RECIPIENT COUNTRIES, AND PREPARE A COMPARATIVE STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF THESE PROGRAMS AND THEIR INTERRELATIONSHIP FOR DISCUSSION AT A FUTURE SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE.

U.S. POSITION:

A. WITH RESPECT TO THE FIRST TWO POINTS IN THE CONCLUSION STATED ABOVE, CAREFUL ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO REV 1 OF IGC 17/5 AND THE GA RESOLUTION BEFORE THE POSITION STATEMENT IS DRAWN. THE PARAGRAPHS REFERRED TO IN THE PAPER (CFA-2 7B) 59, 60, 83, 84 STILL APPEAR TO BE ACCEPTABLE STATEMENTS BUT THEY MAY NOT REFLECT THE TOTALITY OF PRESENT DAY CONCERNS. THEY DO CONSTITUTE A CHARTER WHICH WFP HAS BEEN UNABLE TO

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LIVE UP TO FULLY. THEREFORE WE COULD ENDORSE FURTHER STEPS TO STRENGTHEN WFP'S CAPACITY IN THOSE SITUATIONS (E.G. BANGLADESH) WHERE MEANINGFUL FIELD COORDINATION IS IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US. WE MIGHT WELL ARGUE THAT THE THIRD PROPOSAL (THE STUDY) SHOULD BE CONCLUDED AND DISCUSSED PRIOR TO ACTION ON THE FIRST TWO. (HOWEVER IF THERE IS ANY IMPLICATION IN THE FIRST TWO FOR REVISIONS TO THE GENERAL REGULATIONS THAT ORDER OF PROCEDURE WOULD BE FAULTY SINCE THE REG'S REVISION

IS LIKELY TO GET UNDERWAY SOON. SEE AGENDA ITEM 13).

B. THERE PROBABLY ARE SCANT GROUNDS TO OBJECT TO A COMPARATIVE STUDY, WHICH MIGHT RESULT IN A USEFUL INFORMATIVE DOCUMENT FOR A NUMBER OF PURPOSES. (ITS USE IN SOME FUTURE SESSION OF THE CFA MIGHT PRESENT SOME PROBLEMS, AS WE COULD EXPECT EFFORTS ON THE PART OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO DEVELOP A RECIPIENT-ORIENTED SERIES OF POLICIES AND TERMS IN LINE WITH THE GENERAL THEME OF WORLD FOOD SECURITY.) IN THIS FIRST STAGE AT LEAST IT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE U.S. POSITION AT THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE AND AT VARIOUS MEETINGS SINCE, AND IN A SENSE IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE NEW FUNCTIONS ASSIGNED TO CFA. WE MIGHT CAUTION AGAINST A DOCUMENT WHICH WOULD APPEAR TO DICTATE TO COUNTRIES WHAT THE CRITERIA AND TERMS OF BILATERAL FOOD ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE, AS DISTINCT FROM POINTING OUT THE DIFFERENCES THAT DO EXIST, BUT ENDORSE THE IDEA OF A COMPARATIVE STUDY. WE SHOULD CALL ATTENTION TO RELATED WORK IN THE DAC, THE CGFPI, WFC AND THE WORLD BANK WHICH, WHILE UNDOUBTEDLY KNOWN TO THE DRAFTERS, ARE NOT GIVEN REAL RECOGNITION IN THE PAPER. VOLPE

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